

How Do I Cite Sources Using MLA Style?

MLA style allows you to acknowledge the resources you use in your paper. If you are not sure how or when to document a source (in other words, to give credit to another author), please discuss your questions with your professor. Without realizing it, you might plagiarize, ruining a good paper, semester, or even career. See the ARC's handouts on documentation and plagiarism for more information.

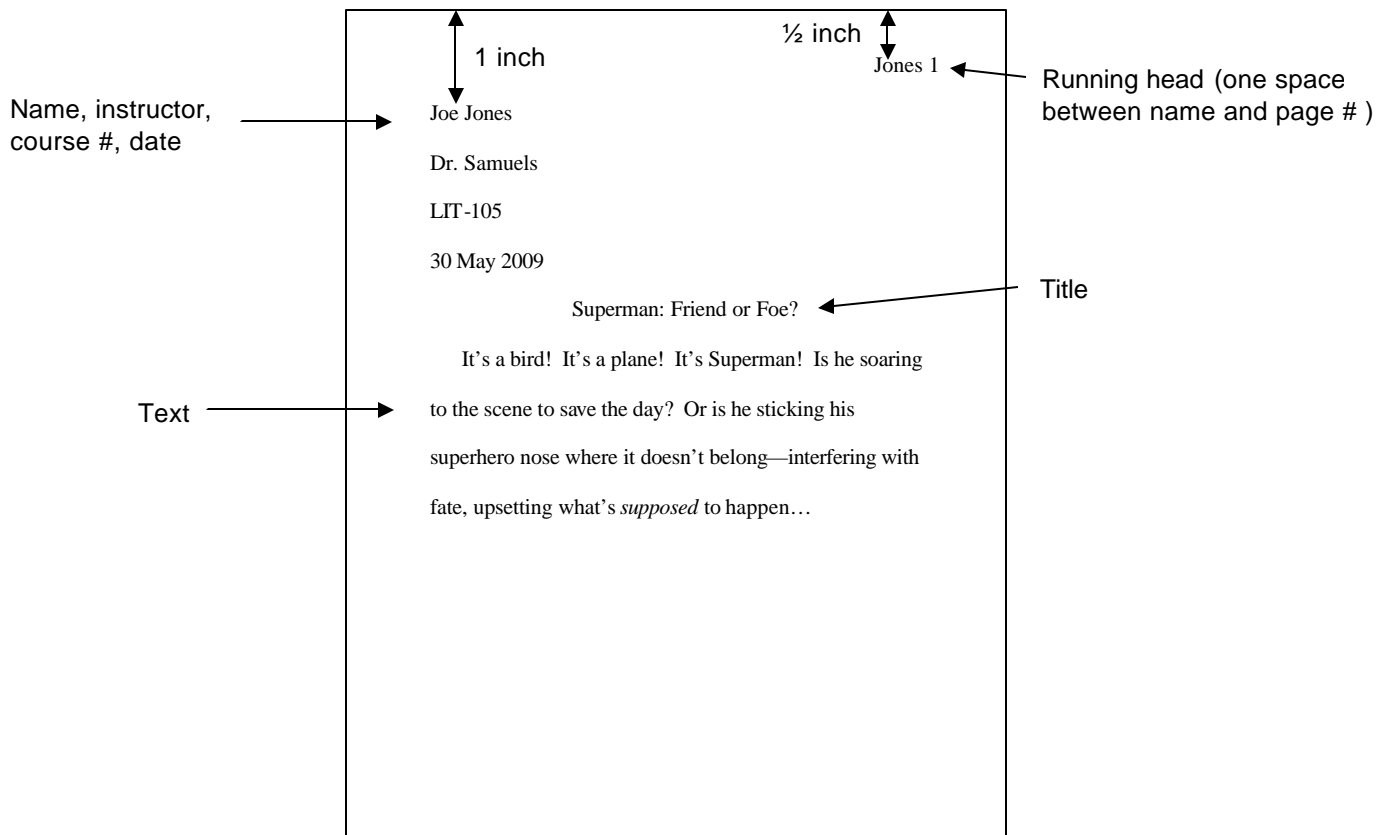
General Format Guidelines

- ✓ Type your paper on 8.5" x 11" white paper (keep a copy).
- ✓ Double-space *everything* (quotations, references, citations, etc).
- ✓ *All* margins should be a uniform 1-inch (do not right justify).
- ✓ Indent the first word of each paragraph ½ inch or five spaces.
- ✓ Avoid the first (I/me) and second (you) person by writing in exclusively in third person (he/she/it/they).
- ✓ Write in active voice (i.e., "Research shows that...") rather than passive voice (i.e., "It is shown in the research that...").
- ✓ Discuss works of literature in the present tense (i.e., "At one point, Captain Ahab tells his men...").
- ✓ Proofread to make sure your paper is error-free. Do not correct with a pen on your final draft; if there are errors, re-do the paper.
- ✓ Secure your paper with a staple unless your professor has given you other instructions.
- ✓ Number each page, including the first page, in the upper right-hand corner unless otherwise instructed by your professor. Also, include your last name before the page number.
- ✓ Use *italics* for titles of books, journals, magazines, etc. Do not underline.

Title Page

- ✓ While you do not need a formal title page, you still need to identify the purpose of the paper.
- ✓ On successive lines starting from the top left-corner of the first page, type your name, your instructor's name, the course number, and the date submitted. Be sure to double-space.
- ✓ On the next line, type the title of your paper and center it between the margins.

- ✓ Make your title interesting.
- ✓ If the title is too long for one line, center the first portion of the title on one line and the second portion on the next line.
- ✓ Do not underline your title, and capitalize only important words.
- ✓ On the following double-spaced line, begin your text.



Sample First Page

Documenting Your Sources

Parenthetical citations in the body of the text are needed to acknowledge your sources, and they have been streamlined so that they present only the most essential information. (The full bibliographic references come at the end of the paper on the Works Cited page). Notice in the examples below, the punctuation comes after the citation (with the exception of quotation marks).

- ✓ To cite from a source (note that only the relevant page numbers have been cited here; the title of the book, journal article, or other source does not need mentioned because the reader may refer to the Works Cited list):
 - Kenneth Clark raises some interesting questions concerning artistic “masterpieces” (1-5).
- ✓ To cite from a book when you are using more than one by the same author (for instance, Clark, whose name you refer to in the text):
 - Clark has amassed a consensus (*Masterpiece* 12-13).
- ✓ To cite from a book when you are using more than one by the same author and the author’s name is not stated in the text, cite in this manner using the name, comma, title, and page numbers:
 - (Clark, *Masterpiece* 12-13).
- ✓ To cite more than one author at a time, separate names and pages with a semi-colon:
 - This phenomenon is well documented (Clocker 52-57; Commission on the Humanities 15).
- ✓ To quote from a source (when author’s name is not used in the text):
 - A 1983 report found “a decline in the academic quality of students choosing teaching as a career” (Hook 10).

Works Cited

- ✓ On a separate page at the end of your paper, include a Works Cited list that includes only those works you have actually referred to in the text.
- ✓ Use the hanging indentation format. The first line is flush with the left margin and the following lines are indented one-half inch.
- ✓ Every source you document must have a publication medium marker. The most common are “Print” and “Web.”
- ✓ List two or three authors in the order they appear on the title page of a book. The first name (of two or three names) is set up with the last name first, a comma, and then the first name. Additional authors’ names follow in normal form.
- ✓ If a work has four or more authors, you *may* use only the first name listed followed by “et al.”
 - Jones, Thomas A., et al. *Title of the Book*.
- ✓ When an author is unknown, alphabetize by the title disregarding “A,” “An,” and “The” at the beginning of the title.

- ✓ You will notice in the sample below that there are three hyphens (---) beneath the listing for Kenneth Clark. The three hyphens indicate a second book written (or, in this case, edited) by Clark.
- ✓ Include both the volume and issue number for scholarly journals.

Jones 11

Works Cited

Blocker, Clyde E., Robert H. Plummer, and Richard Richardson, Jr. *The Two-Year College: A Social Synthesis*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1965. Print.

Clark, Kenneth. *What is a Masterpiece?* London: Thames, 1979. Print.

---, ed. *The Masterpiece Anthology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980. Print.

Commission on the Humanities. *The Humanities in American Life: Report of the Commission on the Humanities*. Berkeley: University of California P, 1980. Print.

Conant, Gavin C. "Neural Evolution on Mammalian Protein Surfaces," *Trends in Genetics* 25.9 (2009): 377-81. Print.

Hook, Janet. "Raise Standards of Admission, Colleges Urged." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 4 May 1983: 1+. Print.

Wagner, Cynthia G. "Creating Global Strategies for Humanity's Future." *Futurist* 40.6 (2006): 54-58. *Academic Search Elite*. Web. 5 Jan. 2007.

Hanging indent - second line - 1/2 inch from margin

Three hyphens for second book by same author

Book with three authors

Corporate author

Journal

Weekly magazine

Web

Sample Works Cited Page

Citing from a Web Page

Perhaps the most popular of the new electronic sources is the Internet Web page. Use information from these sources with care.

- ✓ Decide what information from the Internet source is appropriate. **Be careful.** A Web page is almost always produced with some ulterior motive and thus carries with it some inherent self-interest in the information it offers.
- ✓ Be as specific as you can about pinpointing how someone else can locate that same information.

- ✓ Always save a hard copy (printout) of electronic sources you cite; Web pages often disappear.
- ✓ URLs are not longer required. If you need to include a Web address to aid the reader in finding the site, please consult the latest *MLA Handbook*.

In-text Citation for Web Page

- ✓ Include writer's last name.
- ✓ If the author is not named, use the title.
- ✓ If the source does not include **fixed** page (pdf), section, or paragraph numbers, just reference with the author's name. **Caution:** Page numbers from printouts vary from printer to printer, so these numbers should not be used.
- ✓ If the paragraphs are numbered, cite as follows: (Jones par.5)

Works Cited for Web Page

The citation should be double spaced, and subsequent lines (after the first) should be indented five spaces. Also, include:

- ✓ Author's name, last name first, then his/her initial(s)
- ✓ Additional authors' names in normal order
- ✓ Title of the specific article or item from which you are extracting the idea and/or words
- ✓ Title of the Web site (italicized)
- ✓ Name of publisher or *n.p.* for no publisher
- ✓ Date of publication or last update. If none, write *n.d.* for no date.
- ✓ Medium (Web)
- ✓ Date you accessed the materials

Citing from an Online Database

When the information you require is accessible from a database:

- ✓ Cite the author, title, and publication information as you would for any periodical, with page numbers where available. If no pages are available, write *n. pag.*
- ✓ Identify the database (italicized), the medium (Web), and the date you accessed the information

Note: This style sheet is only a start! All the preceding guidelines were compiled with the assistance of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th ed.* If you are not certain in what style you should format your paper, please consult your course syllabus or ask your professor. For the many reference and citation formats not listed here, consult the *MLA Handbook*.